

Wisconsin Bowhunter Wildlife Survey 2004

By Brian Dhuey and Jessica Kitchell

Abstract

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in conjunction with the Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA) and the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association (WBA) surveyed members of the WBA to help track mammalian and avian wildlife populations.

Methods

A survey was included in the 1997-2004 fall issues of *The Bowhunter* (official publication of the WBA) for bowhunters to remove and record the animals seen during their hunting trips. At the completion of the 2004 archery season, hunters were asked to return the completed survey to the WDNR, by tri-folding the survey with the postage paid side visible, and dropping it in the mailbox. No return postage was necessary.

Results

Wisconsin bowhunters sent back 102 Bowhunter Wildlife surveys after the completion of the 2004 archery season. This was lower than in 2003 when 122 hunters returned surveys. These 102 bowhunters averaged 21.7 trips into the field during the archery season. The average total hours hunted during the season was 72.5. The average time spent hunting during a single day was 3.4 hours. This is in comparison to the 2003 season where hunters averaged 22.7 trips, 71.5 hours hunted during the season, and 3.1 hours per day. During both years, most trips were taken in the month of October, followed by November, September, and December.

Not surprisingly, the animal most frequently sighted while hunting were deer (Table 1). Hunters reported sighting an average of 47.8 deer per season and 2.2 deer per trip. This is in comparison to the 2003 season where hunters averaged seeing 61.6 deer per season and 2.7 deer per trip. Although the survey does not ask questions about harvest, it is possible that a change in hunter effort due to harvest success could cause a change in survey response from year to year.

The next most frequently sighted animal was wild turkey. Archers averaged seeing 1.3 turkeys per trip. This is in comparison to the 2003 season when hunter's averaged seeing 1.5 turkeys per trip. Raccoon and ruffed grouse followed turkeys as some of the more frequently seen wildlife. The least frequently sighted animals were the otter, American marten, bobcat, badger, wolf, and fisher.

Hunters were also asked to report animals they saw that were not listed on the survey form. This year nothing too unusual was reported. Some of the most frequently reported species were squirrel, pheasant, owl, opossum, and cottontail rabbit. The data collected from this survey will be used by the WDNR in estimating distribution and abundance of Wisconsin's wildlife.

Table 1. Total number of animals seen during the 2004 archery season by deer management region (number seen per 1,000 hours hunted).

Species	Region					Statewide
	Central Forest	Eastern Farmland	Northern Forest	Southern Farmland	Western Farmland	
American Marten	--	1 (0.4)	--	--	--	1 (0.1)
Badger	--	--	--	4 (1.3)	--	4 (0.5)
Black Bear	8 (17.1)	5 (2.2)	8 (9.9)	--	1 (1.1)	22 (3.0)
Bobcat	--	1 (0.4)	1 (1.2)	--	--	2 (0.3)
Coyote	--	7 (3.1)	8 (9.9)	60 (20.1)	16 (18.2)	91 (12.3)
Deer	186 (0.4) ¹	1,567 (0.7) ¹	327 (0.4) ¹	2,016 (0.7) ¹	764 (0.9) ¹	4,874 ² (0.7) ¹
Fisher	--	2 (0.9)	1 (1.2)	--	2 (2.3)	5 (0.7)
Fox (Red & Gray)	--	19 (8.5)	2 (2.5)	7 (2.3)	6 (6.8)	34 (4.6)
House Cat	3 (6.4)	23 (10.3)	--	48 (16.1)	7 (8.0)	81 (11.0)
Otter	--	--	--	--	--	--
Porcupine	4 (8.5)	12 (5.4)	10 (12.4)	--	--	26 (3.5)
Raccoon	8 (17.1)	57 (25.6)	--	138 (46.2)	19 (21.6)	222 (30.1)
Ruffed Grouse	22 (46.9)	30 (13.5)	62 (76.8)	13 (4.4)	45 (51.1)	172 (23.3)
Skunk	--	4 (1.8)	--	7 (2.3)	1 (1.1)	12 (1.6)
Turkey	141 (300.8)	1,028 (461.2)	46 (57.0)	1,468 (491.5)	280 (318.2)	2,963 (401.9)
Wolf	2 (4.3)	--	2 (2.5)	--	--	4 (0.5)

¹ Expressed as deer seen per hour. ² 14 sightings from unknown region.

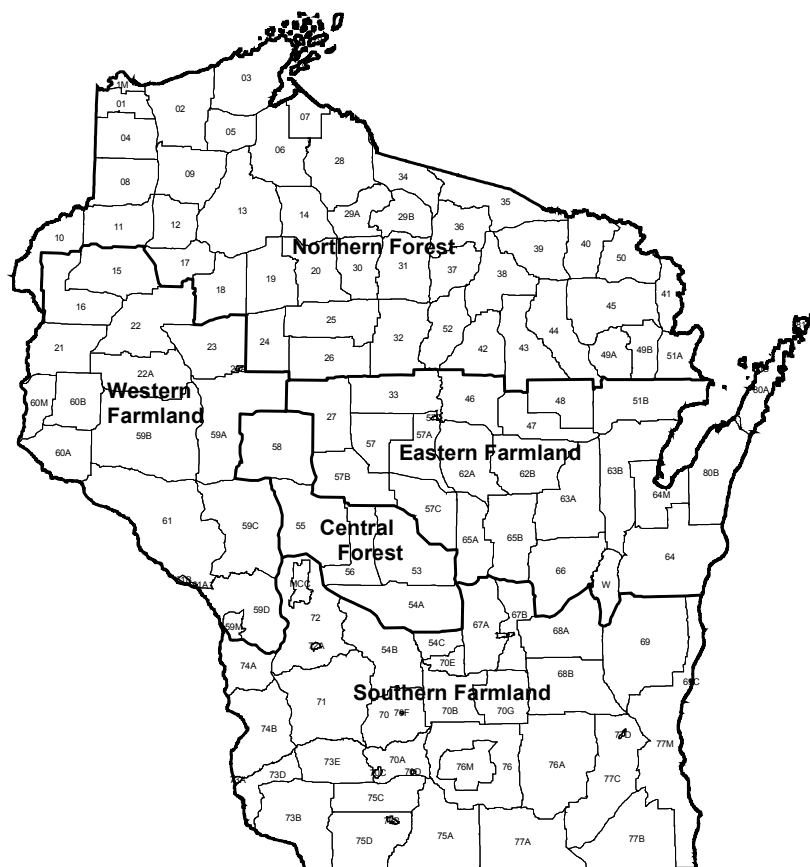


Figure 1. Wisconsin deer management regions.